

To members of the Senate Finance and Claims Committee:EXHIBIT NO. 6Date 3-26-09

The Network believes that healthcare is a human right, not a commodity. Absent comprehensive healthcare reform at the federal level, the state of Montana has a responsibility to increase access to healthcare for Montanans.

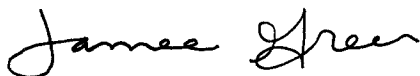
The Healthy Montana Kids Initiative would cover uninsured Montana children when they need it most, giving 30,000 Montanans access to preventative primary care—essential to preventing costly, and more severe, illness later in life.

The Network, along with our members and allies, have dedicated enormous resources to the Healthy Montana Kids Initiative. The Network gathered almost thirteen thousand signatures with the support of staff, board members and our amazing volunteers. And we believe the initiative must be fully funded, enacted and administered in the way that over 70% of Montana voters have called for.

I'd also like to speak with you as a Montanan who spent time this Spring gathering signatures, and speaking with hundreds and hundreds of Montanans about Initiative 155. Overwhelmingly, the Montana voters I spoke with understood when signing our petitions that times were changing, that the economy was only going to get tougher for hardworking poor and moderate-income Montanans and that these uninsured children deserved consistent and effective access to primary and preventative health care.

Montana voters knew what we were signing when tens of thousands of us wrote our names on petitions to get I-155 on the ballot. We knew what we were voting for on Election Day. And we know that the health of our children is not a partisan issue. Please keep full funding of Healthy Montana Kids in HB2.

Sincerely,



Jamee Greer
Lobbyist

Montana Human Rights Network
P.O. Box 1509, Helena, MT 59624
406-442-5506

Members of the Committee,

I am writing to you in regards to the expansion of CHIP.

My name is Stacey Keleen McClure. I am a mother of two, a past coordinator with Montana Women Vote, a Parent's as Teachers Parent Educator and a member of the Missoula Board of Directors of Missoula Head Start.

As both a mother and a parent educator I see the daily need children in our communities have for access to affordable and equitable health insurance. Too many families struggle to feed, house and provide healthy stimulating environments for their children. Experience has taught me that lack of health insurance is one of the number one reasons why parents do not take their children to a doctor until, what was a preventable or a minor injury or infection, becomes a serious illness.

Healthy children learn better than sick children. Increasing the achievement of our schools will help our economy as our schools begin to meet federal requirements. Parents of healthy children miss less work, helping to ensure a strong economy. Parents with health insurance for their children have more opportunities to expand their own educational levels, pulling families out of poverty.

Too many families fall between the gaps in eligibility between Medicaid, CHIP and private insurance. I know, my children had received Medicaid for the first 5 and 6 years of their lives, but have now been 1.5 years without health insurance and in that time have not seen a doctor or dentist. As a result, our children have missed opportunities to participate some activities as we pray everyday that our children stay healthy and avoid serious injury.

Members of this committee know that voters have demanded this expansion. Parents, educators, and health care providers across the state in every community got out and voted this year in favor of this issue. Access to affordable and equitable health insurance is a necessary part of ensuring that our communities are healthy, that our children are successful in their educations, and that our economies continue to have strong work forces. We voted for you, We voted for expanding CHIP and we expect you to support us, the voters, your constituents when you vote in favor of expanding CHIP.

Thank you for your generous service to our communities, for your time and for your support.

Stacey Keleen McClure
1131 Sherwood ST.
Missoula, MT 59808

406-880-6527
stacey.k.mcclure@gmail.com

January 18, 2009

Members of the Committee,

My name is Kristie Scheel. I work in the Bitterroot Valley as a community coordinator for Montana Women Vote. Although we have been extremely busy this past year registering low-income women voters, organizing community events, and reaching out to local groups - I believe our work getting I-155 on the ballot served as inspiration for many community members to take notice.

We've met hundreds of women and men in support of expanding CHIP, as this one single measure has the power to improve the health and well-being of their own children; resulting in better access to medical care, an increase in quality of care, and ultimately fewer school days missed. Most importantly, many folks in the Bitterroot are relieved by the possibility that they will not have to worry themselves sick over every bump, bruise, and sniffle that is left untreated.

One single mom from Hamilton, named Rebecca, holds three jobs to provide for herself and her son. However, her son is currently ineligible for CHIP – as she makes just enough to cover their basic needs, but *exceeds* the maximum income level outlined in CHIP. With the new proposed expansion, Rebecca's son will be insured. Although Rebecca has indicated that she is not “political” and had never previously voted on election day, 2008 was her first visit to the polls – all in support for CHIP.

We hope that you consider to fully fund the Medicaid/CHIP program as this has proved to be one initiative that makes good sense to us in the Bitterroot.

Sincerely,

Kristie Scheel

709 South Fourth Street
Hamilton, Montana
59840
(406) 360-6938

From: MWV Coordinator
To: jlsswift@mtwi.net
Date: Wednesday, March 25, 2009 2:05:29 PM
Subject:FW: Chip letter.

Sorry this letter form Stacey F wasn't included in the ones sent earlier . .

From: mwv_blgscordinator@yahoo.com [mailto:mwv_blgscordinator@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2009 10:13 PM
To: Alysha Goheen-Janotta
Subject: Chip letter.

Dear Members of the Committee;

For several months I worked as the Billings Community Coordinator for Montana Women Vote; registering voters, holding community political education events, and, more importantly, helping gather signatures to make sure that all Montana kids had equal access to a healthy future. I-155 was an extremely important issue to many of the women that I helped register this last election cycle, as was evidenced by the overwhelming support that it received, passing in every county in the state.

I am proud to have worked to help pass this bill, and I am touched by many stories I was lucky enough to share with women in the Billings area. One woman told me that she had an autistic son that had to be on 24 hour a day medical care. She was able to work so long as her son received his Medicaid benefits to help with the cost that such care requires. When she began to make too much money to be on Medicaid or CHIP, yet she wasn't making enough money to cover insurance premiums. As happens all too often, she was forced to quit her job and take care of her son herself as much as she could. She was excited to sign the petition, and I believe that now with CHIP expansion, this woman will be able to go back to work to support her and her son with a more promising future and no outrageous medical debt.

The voters in Montana have spoken, and I urge you to fully fund I-155 for Medicaid and CHIP expansion. All Montana kids should have access to health care. Not only does their future depend on it, so does ours.

Thank you.

Stacey Faldetta
Billings Community Coordinator
Montana Women Vote
1433 Wyoming Ave. Apt L
Billings, MT 59102
(406) 696-0887

"Project desire into reality, change reality."

Stacey Faldetta
MWV Billings Community Coordinator
406-696-0887

Members of the Committee,

While registering voters this past election cycle, I spoke with many folks about I-155 and their hardships with health care. The community in Great Falls was optimistic and glad there was proposed legislation around health care for children. There were numerous members in the community that were interested in supporting I-155 but were not registered voters. When I told them that only registered voters could sign and vote on the issue, I had people registering for the first time with excitement to vote on an issue they cared about.

There were many unfortunate incidences where I listened to families who had no insurance for their children. They made too much to qualify for CHIP and could not afford to pay premiums and relied on hope that everyone was healthy and would stay healthy.

As a constituent who has qualified for CHIP, I feel blessed everyday that my children have health care coverage regardless if I do not. I am asking for you to fully fund the Medicaid/CHIP program as the voters in Montana supported and voted for I-155.

Megan Myskewitz
1300 6th Ave NW
Great Falls, MT 59404